

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /085 W

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FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

SECSTATE WASHDC 5876

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 3177

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, US, WB, GW, GE, FR, UK, UR

SUBJECT: RUMORED SOVIET CONCERN OVER CURRENT GERMAN-
GERMAN RELATIONS

1. AT USUAL MONTHLY MEETING OF ALLIED MINISTERS DECEMBER
16 WITH FRG PLENIPOTENTIARY SPANGENBERG, LATTER SAID SOVIETS
SEEM UNUSUALLY JUMPY THESE DAYS OVER WHAT MAY BE GOING ON
BETWEEN THE TWO GERMANIES. HE SAID HE HAD THIS IMPRESSION
FROM AMBASSADOR FALIN IN BONN AND FROM OTHERS IN FALIN'S
OFFICER, AS WELL AS HINT FROM GDR LAWYER VOGEL, WHOM
SPANGENBERG SEES FROM TIME TO TIME. FRENCH MINISTER SAID
FRG REP IN EAST BERLIN GAUS TOLD HIM RECENTLY HE HAD "IN
DER NASE" THE FEELING THAT SOVS ARE A BIT MORE THAN USUALLY
SUSPICIOUS OF WHAT THEIR EAST GERMAN COMRADES ARE UP TO.

2. SUSPICION AND CONCERN IF ANY APPARENTLY FOCUS TO
CONSIDERABLE EXTENT ON RECENT VOLKSWAGEN DEAL PRO-
VIDING 10,000 CARS TO GDR. ACCORDING TO SPANGENBERG,
THIS WAS QUIETLY WORKED OUT BY HONECKER PERSONALLY, WITH
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VERY LITTLE OTHER FOREKNOWLEDGE WITHIN GDR AND NONE ON
PART OF SOVIETS. SKODA HAD HOPED SELL CARS TO GDR AND
IS UNHAPPY OVER DEAL. HONECKER'S ALLEGED INTENTION
IS MAKE VW'S AVAILABLE TO SUPPORTERS IN GDR WHO DO NOT
HAVE WESTMARKS, I.E., THIS STEP TI AMONG THOSE AIMED
AT COUNTERING DISSATISFACTION AMONG GDR CITIZENRY WHO
DO NOT HAVE HARD CURRENCY PERMITTING THEM TO BUY IN

INTERSHOPS.

3. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, PRICE TO GDR WAS VERY CHEAP AND THEY ARE TO PAY IN MACHINE TOOLS. VW INTEREST IS DESCRIBED AS LESS IN ORIGINAL SUPPLY OF CARS THAN IN FOLLOW-UP SPARE PARTS AND MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS, WHICH WILL BE CONSIDERABLE BUSINESS OVER GOOD MANY YEARS. IT MAY BE THIS ELEMENT OF CONTINUED ECONOMIC-PSYCHOLOGICAL FRG PENETRATION WHICH INTER ALIA BOTHERS SOVIETS.

4. ON GENERAL GDR SITUATION, SPANGENBERG SAID HE ASKED VOGEL WHETHER REPORTS OF SERIOUS CURRENT FRICTION BETWEEN HONECKER AND STOPH WERE CORRECT. WITHOUT ANSWERING QUESTION, VOGEL SAID ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP IN GDR ARE VERY MUCH AT ODDS RIGHT NOW.

5. ON ONE OTHER POSSIBLE FACET OF SOVIET DISPLEASURE, SPANGENBERG SAID MEMBER OF FLAIN'S EMBASSY WAS TALBEPOUNDING AND ALMOST APOLOGETIC IN TALKING TO HIM ABOUT POSSIBLE EARLY SCHMIDT-HONECKER MEETING, SAYING SUCH MEETING WOULD ABSOLUTELY NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL AFTER BREZHNEV HAD BEEN TO BONN. SPANGENBERG SAID HE THINKS MEETING WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY OCCUR SOMETIME IN 1978, TIME AND PLACE YET TO BE WORKED OUT. IN HIS VIEW, IT DEFINITELY SHOULD NOT BE IN EAST BERLIN, SINCE SCHMIDT'S
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COMING THERE FOR OFFICIAL MEETING WITH HONECKER WOULD BE TOO MUCH OF A SLAP IN THE FACE TO WEST BERLIN AND WOULD ENHANCE TOO MUCH STATUS OF EAST BERLIN AS CAPITAL OF GDR. GEORGE

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Sent Date: 19-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
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